

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
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<http://www.house.gov/science/welcome.htm>

March 6, 2002

Mr. Mitchell E. Daniels, Jr.  
Director, Office of Management and Budget  
Old Executive Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20501

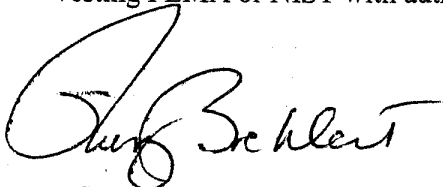
Dear Mr. Daniels:

We are writing to you as a result of today's House Science Committee hearing on the collapse of the World Trade Center buildings. There was unanimity among the witnesses on the need for a comprehensive assessment and research agenda to address evacuation procedures, emergency response, and structural analysis of the site's buildings. The goal of such a study would be to improve the safety of both the public and the emergency responders in the event of another building collapse.

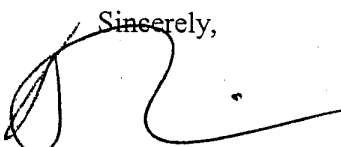
We understand that the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) has submitted a proposal for a comprehensive follow-on study. Dr. Arden Bement, NIST Director, stated at the hearing that NIST had received policy approval for such an initiative. However, we are concerned that NIST does not have the financial resources to implement its plan. Although NIST has allocated \$2 million for its efforts, the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Building Performance Assessment Team (BPAT) has estimated that \$40 million would be required to fund a comprehensive study of an event of this magnitude and complexity. We urge you to provide NIST with the funding required. The NIST proposal is fully consistent with the Administration's focus on Homeland Security and would benefit all Americans.

We have also been troubled by accounts that the BPAT did not have immediate access to the World Trade Center site. As a result, structural steel artifacts were destroyed that may have been important to the investigation. BPAT's access to architectural drawings critical to its investigation was also delayed. NIST or FEMA should have investigative authority (akin to the National Transportation Safety Board) to ensure that similar problems do not arise again.

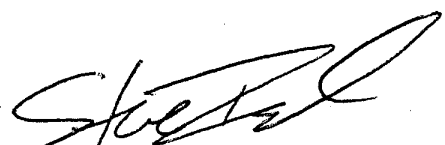
We look forward to your response regarding funding for NIST's proposed activities and your views on vesting FEMA or NIST with authority to allow them to fully fulfill their duties.



SHERWOOD L. BOEHLERT  
Chairman

Sincerely,  


ANTHONY WEINER  
Member of Congress



STEVE ISRAEL  
Member of Congress